

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O PJOHNSON

APPROVED BY:S/S-O PJOHNSON

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P 221304Z JAN 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 016018

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT SEOUL 0516 ACTION SECSTATE INFO OTTAWA PARIS
TOKYO IAEA VIENNA DTG O 221015Z JAN 76

QUOTE

S E C R E T SEOUL 0516

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD: PLS PASS AMBASSADOR SNEIDER
AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNUC PARM KS FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

SUMMARY: IN OPENING MEETING ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING JANUARY
22 BETWEEN US TEAM LED BY ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER
AND ROK GROUP COMPRISED OF MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
CHOE HYONG-SOP AND KAERI, AND MOFA OFFICIALS, MINISTER CHOE
PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING ROK/US ATOMIC ENERGY COMMIT-
TEE, SISTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTES,
AND OVERALL SCIENCE AGREEMENT. STRESSING THAT U.S. COMMITMENTS
ON COOPERATION WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW ROK DECISION TO CANCEL

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FRENCH REPROCESSING CONTRACT, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY

OUTLINED POSSIBLE AREAS OF U.S. COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR ENERGY FIELD. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD CHARGE LATE JANUARY 21 THAT HE INFORMED BY MOFA THAT ROKG EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CANADIAN FINAL ANSWER ON FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT AFTERNOON JANUARY 23. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RESPONSE MINISTER CHOE'S WELCOMING REMARKS AND OPENING COMMENT THAT MEETINGS SHOULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY DISSOLVE ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING NUCLEAR REPROCESSING ISSUE, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER REVIEWED PAST ROK/US COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR AREA AND RECENT NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE US, THEN OUTLINED AREAS WHERE US AND ROK MIGHT COOPERATE EFFECTIVELY IN FUTURE, PROVIDED ROK DEFINITELY CANCELS RE-PROCESSING PLANS. IN THIS CONTEXT THE US WELCOMED CURRENT DIRECTION OF ROK THINKING ON PURCHASE FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT AND HOPED THAT FINAL DECISION TO CANCEL WOULD BE MADE PROMPTLY SO THAT WAY WOULD BE OPEN TO ENLARGED ROK/US NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION IN FUTURE.

2. RESPONDING, SCIENCE MINISTER CHOE REVIEWED BACKGROUND AND REASONING BEHIND FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT, COMING DOWN WITH SOME HEAT ON POINT THAT ROK/FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR LONG PERIOD OF TIME PRIOR TO US RAISING ITS OBJECTIONS. CHOE AFFIRMED THAT ROKG HAD NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SINCE IT COULD NOT AFFORD SUCH DEVELOPMENT AND IT RELIED COMPLETELY ON US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA.

3. CHOE MADE THREE PROPOSALS FOR: (A) STANDING COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT; (B) ASISTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ROK AND US RESEARCH INSTITUTES; AND (C) OVERALL SCIENCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. NOTING THAT US/ROK STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT HAD BEEN MOST HELPFUL, CHOE SAID SIMILAR COMMITTEE IN NUCLEAR AREA COULD HELP AVOID SUCH PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH HAD ARISEN OVER REPROCESSING ISSUE. ROKG ALSO NEEDED WINDOW HE SAID TO OBTAIN ADVICE, TRAINING AND MATERIAL FROM US NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTES. RESEARCH INSTITUTE SISTER RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE RE-ESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD NOT ENTAIL A GREAT DEAL OF OBLIGATION IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BUT COULD BE MOST USEFUL AS CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION. SCIENCE AGREEMENT CHOE CONCEIVED OF AS "KIND OF SECRET

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FORMALITY" BUT ONE THAT WOULD ALSO BE MOST USEFUL.

4. IN RESPONSE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARYOKRATZER INDICATED THAT WHILE WE COULD NOT MAKE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS THESE WERE KIND OF SUGGESTIONS WE LOOKING FOR, AGAIN STRESSING POINT THAT COMMITMENT TO SUCH ENDEAVORS WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW RATHER THAN PRECEDE DECISION ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING.

5. CHOE'S APPROACH WAS CONCILIATORY AND MODERATE, BUT HE AVOIDED DIRECT LINK BETWEEN OUTCOME OF TALKS AND REPROCESSING DECISION. HE DID REFER IN CLOSING REMARKS TO ROK DESIRE TO LOOK FOR "ALTERNATIVES" WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLORED DURING SECOND MEETING SCHEDULED MORNING, FRIDAY, JANUARY 23.

6. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD CHARGE LATE JANUARY 21 THAT HE INFORMED MOFA THAT ROKG EXPECTED TO BE ABLE PROVIDE CANADIANS FINAL ANSWER REGARDING FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT AFTERNOON JANUARY 23.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE016018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O PJOHNSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760024-0691
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760133/aaaabdhy.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING SUMMARY: IN OPENING MEETING ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING JANUARY
TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, FR, US, (KRATZER, MYRON B), (CHOE HYONG-SOP)
To: CINCPAC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006